

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /116 W

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R 090851Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8550

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJ: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DISSOLVED; GENERAL ELECTIONS SET FOR
OCTOBER 14.

1. PRESIDENT KENYATTA, IN WIDELY ANTICIPATED MOVE, HAS DISSOLVED KENYA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 14 AS DATE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS. ALL 158 ELECTED SEATS IN 171 SEAT ASSEMBLY WILL BE AT STAKE. UNDER KENYAN CONSTITUTION, NEXT ASSEMBLY TO COMMENCE IN THREE MONTHS.

2. ON AUGUST BACK BENCHERS, CITING UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND LED BY OUTSPOKEN GOK CRITIC JOHN SERONEY (WHO HAD BILL PENDING STRENGTHENING LEGISLATURE'S ROLE VIZ-A--VIS PRESIDENT), REJECTED MOTION BY VICE PRESIDENT MOI TO ADJOURN INDEFINITELY. SINCE JULY 5 INTRODUCTION OF SWAHILI AS OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN ASSEMBLY (NAIROBI 5648), PACE OF ASSEMBLY'S DELIBERATIONS HAS BEEN MARKEDLY SLOWED BY NEAR-CONTINUOUS AND OFTEN ACRIMONIOUS DEBATE OVER USE OF SWAHILI IN CONSIDERING LEGISLATION WHICH HAD BEEN DRAFTED AND INTRODUCED IN ENGLISH. ATTORNEY GENERAL NJONJO RULED THAT BUSINESS OF GOK, INCLUDING COLLECTION OF TAXES, CAN BE CARRIED FORWARD FOR SIX MONTHS WITHOUT LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL.

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3. ALL CANDIDATES WISHING TO CONTEST ELECTIONS MUST APPLY TO SOLE POLITICAL PARTY, KENYA AFRICAN NATIONAL UNION (KANU), FOR APPROVAL. THIS APPROVAL EXPECTED TO BE PERFUNCTORY EXCEPT FOR EX-KPU DETAINEES, WHOSE CANDIDACY LIKELY TO BE DISALLOWED ON GROUNDS EITHER A) THREE YEARS HAVE NOT PASSED SINCE RELEASE FROM DETENTION OR B) CANDIDATES HAVE NOT IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES FULLY WITH GOK AND KANU POLICIES.

4. NOMINATION DATE, WHICH WILL BE ANNOUNCED NEXT WEEK, MUST PRECEDE OCTOBER 14 ELECTION BY AT LEAST 28 DAYS (CONSTITUTIONAL MINIMUM FOR CAMPAIGN). IN PRACTICE CAMPAIGN ALREADY UNDERWAY IN MANY CONSTITUENCIES ON LIMITED SCALE BETWEEN INCUMBENTS AND EX-CIVIL SERVANTS WHO HAD TO RESIGN POSTS JUNE 30 TO CONTEST ELECTION.

5. MEANWHILE PREPARATIONS GOING SMOOTHLY FOR AUG. 17 LOCAL ELECTIONS. WHILE LOCAL OFFICE CONTEST DOES NOT RECEIVE SAME PRESS ATTENTION ACCORDED GENERAL ELECTION, ACTIVE CAMPAIGNING REPORTEDLY TAKING PLACE AT WARD LEVEL ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS.

MARSHALL

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